AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (previously presented) A method of operating a communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol including:

distributing a tariff for the use of the communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, the tariff comprising a formula for calculating a charge as a function of a loading of the communications network, for use by at least one of the customer terminals of the communications network; and

calculating using the tariff a charge for use by the at least one customer terminal of the communications network.

2. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, in which the step of distributing the tariff includes steps of communicating separately the formula for calculating the charge and coefficients for use in the formula.

3. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, in which the tariff is distributed to customer terminals by multicasting.

4. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further including a further step of distributing to the customer terminals a revised tariff.

5. (original) A method according to claim 4 , in which the step of distributing a revised tariff comprises communicating revised coefficients for use in the formula previously distributed to the customer terminals.

6. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4, further including detecting loading of network resources and determining a revised tariff in dependence upon the results of the detected loading.

7. (original) A method according to claim 6, in which the steps of detecting loading and determining a revised tariff are carried out automatically by a network management platform.

8. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 further including communicating to a customer terminal data identifying a first predetermined communications channel, and at the customer terminal subsequently monitoring the communications channel for communications relating to the tariff.

9. (currently amended) A method according to claim 8, further including communicating on the first communications channel data identifying one or more further communications channels, and wherein the customer terminal subsequently monitors ~~in addition the or each further channel~~the one or more further communications channels.

10. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9, further including introducing a new communications channel and identifying the new communications channel on a communications channel previously identified to the customer terminal depending on loading of the previously identified communications channel.

11. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 further including communicating encrypted tariff data to the customer terminal, and decrypting the tariff data within a secure module located at the customer terminal.

12. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11 further including communicating different tariff data on a plurality of different communication channels and providing at a customer terminal a key specific to tariff data on one of the plurality of communication channels.

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 further including operating a plurality of different services on the communications network, communicating different tariffs for different respective services to the multiplicity of customer terminals, and selectively varying a respective tariff depending on an operational condition of the respective service.

14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further including communicating different tariffs having different respective volatilities to different respective ones of the multiplicity of customer terminals.

16. (previously presented) A method of operating a communications network, including:

calculating for each of a multiplicity of customers, using a selected one of a plurality of different tariffs distributed to a respective customer terminal attached to the network, charges for the use of network resources by the respective customer terminal attached to the network,

measuring the loading of network resources, and

varying one or more of the plurality of different tariffs in dependence upon the loading of the network resources, and in which different ones of the plurality of different tariffs have different respective volatilities.

17. (canceled)

18. (original) A method of operating a communications network comprising:

a) communicating tariff data to a user terminal connected to the network;

b) calculating at the user terminal using the tariff data a charge for traffic communicated between the network and the terminal and making a payment;

c) sampling part only of the traffic communicated between users and the network and for the sampled traffic comparing any payments made by users and the payment due according to the tariff.

19. (currently amended) A method of operating a communications network comprising:

a) establishing contracts between network users and a network operator and storing user contract data;

b) sampling part only of the traffic to or from a user on the network;

c) comparing sampled traffic with traffic contracted for by the user; and

d) amending ~~the~~ a user status of the user when a discrepancy between the sampled parameters and the contracted parameters is detected.

20. (original) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of establishing contracts between network users and the network operator includes making an advance payment for network usage.

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of amending the user status includes fining the user.

22. (original) A method according to claim 19, in which in step (a) the user transfers a deposit to the network operator, which deposit is debited in step (d) when the discrepancy between the sampled parameters and the contracted parameters is detected.

23. (previously presented) A method of operating a communications network including:

distributing a tariff via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, and

calculating using the tariff a charge for use by the customer terminal of the communications network,

and in which the step of distributing the tariff includes steps of communicating separately a formula for calculation of network usage charges, and coefficients for use in the formula.

24. (previously presented) A communications network arranged to operate by a method according to claim 1.

25. (previously presented) A customer terminal adapted for use in a method according to claim 1.

26. (previously presented) A customer terminal for use in a communications network, the customer terminal including:

a network interface which in use receives tariff information via a communications network;

a store programmed with tariff information received at the interface;

a meter for measuring use by the customer terminal of the network to which the tariff applies and for measuring the state of the network; and

a processor connected to the meter and to the store and arranged to calculate using the tariff information and information relating to the measured use by the customer terminal of the network and information relating to the measured state of the network, a network usage charge.

27.-28. (canceled)

29. (original) A method of operating a communications network comprising

a) at a customer terminal measuring network usage;

b) communicating network usage data from the customer terminal to the network operator; and

c) the network operator sampling part only of the traffic communicated between a customer terminal and the network and for the sampled traffic comparing the network usage with the network usage data from the customer terminal and thereby detecting any discrepancy.

30. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 including communicating encrypted tariff data to the customer terminal, and decrypting the tariff data at the customer terminal.

31. (canceled)

32. (previously presented) A method of operating a communications network, including automatically varying, depending on network loading as detected at a customer terminal, a tariff for network usage by a customer terminal, the tariff being

distributed to the terminal and comprising a formula for calculating a charge as a function of the loading of the communications network for use by the customer terminal.

33. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further including communicating different tariffs from a plurality of different service providers to a respective customer terminal, at the customer terminal selecting between the service providers, and receiving network services via the selected service provider.

34. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, in which the step of establishing contracts includes associating a traffic conditioning agreement (TCA) with a respective customer.

35. (previously presented) A network arranged to operate by a method according to claim 29.

36. (previously presented) A method of operating a communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol, the method comprising:

distributing a tariff for the use of the communications network supporting a packet-based internetworking protocol via the communications network to a multiplicity of customer terminals connected to the communications network, the tariff comprising a variable formula for calculating a charge as a function of a detection congestion level of

the communications network, for use by at least one of the customer terminals of the communications network; and

automatically calculating using the tariff a charge for use by the at least one customer terminal of the communications network in response to the detected congestion level.

37. (canceled)